

The significance of food in the lion, the witch and the wardrobe and anne of gree...

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Children's literature has used the theme of food since the very beginning to clearly describe the internal disputes and conflicts that the characters have within themselves. In Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, food symbolizes the growing maturity in both Anne and Edmund. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, composed by C. S. Lewis in 1950, Edmund's most prominent weakness is his gratification which is used against him by the White Witch. In the novel, food is reflected as the actual struggle the children went through during World War two due to controlled distribution. On the contrary, L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, published in 1908 uses food as well to reflect the impact of rationing and starvation caused by the catastrophic Irish famine of the mid-nineteenth century (Donnelly, 2017). In both novels, the growth in maturity is seen as the children slowly progress into adults. This is evident through the use of food as symbols for power and control, the desire for food seen as a metaphor for sexual hunger and teaching important lessons by using food as a medium. Both Montgomery and Lewis discuss the transition from childhood to adulthood through the concept of food.

In both novels, food is utilized to display power and control by the guardian of the children. The children are dependant on their parents to provide them with shelter, clothing, and food. Although Edmund is raised well, he lacks parental guidance. When the White Witch offers him a "very sweet and foamy and creamy" drink, it is symbolizing a mother who provides milk to her children (Lewis, 37). This quote defines the missing piece in Edmund's life and how the milk symbolizes that. Similiarly, Anne and her mother bond over social events such as teatime but her mother's cooking restricts Anne

from self-realizing and imagining. When Anne wanted to be called Cordelia, she was refused as the name Anne was plain and suited her better. This demonstrates the control and authority Marilla has over Anne. Anne's rejection over the cooked food and returning of the daily bread demonstrates Anne's potential to fight back against authority and control. In both novels, Edmund and Anne are controlled by the power of their mothers but ultimately make the choice to either be restrained by that power or be free without it.

The children growing and maturing is shown in the novels by the rituals of food using food as a motif to spread a message. Accepting the role of cooking as a young girl demonstrates Anne's independence and ability to take on responsibility. In the novel *Anne of Green Gables*, Anne rejects the idea of cooking and refuses the responsibility, proving she has still not entered womanhood. Montgomery writes, "growing cold when she thinks of her layer cake...and dreaming...that she was chased all around by a fearful goblin with a big layer cake for a head (Montgomery 172). The quote proves the youth that remains in Anne and how much she is yet to learn. Anne also says "There's so little scope for imagination in cookery" (Montgomery 124). This shows how cooking is seen as oppressive and not for creativity, which is why Anne was so against it. Although as Anne gets older, she sacrifices her education and scholarship to look after Marilla which also includes cooking. The maturity that develops throughout the novel in Anne is really shown through her interest in cooking. Not only does she provide food to her mother but also supports her financially as the roles are now reversed. This

decision Anne made was based on her love for Marilla which proves not only her growth as a woman but more importantly her growth from a child to an adult.

In distinction to Anne's journey from childhood to adulthood, Edmund's maturity is shown by signifying his sexual frustration through food. Like Anne's denial of taking on the responsibility of cooking, Edmund's loss of control over food shows his immaturity as his desires are worldly and therefore he still is not independent. For example, in the novel, it states "Please, please...please couldn't I have just one piece of Turkish Delight to eat on the way home?" (Lewis 42) Edmund is unable to control his temptations for the sweets which symbolize sex. Jadis tries to lure him with her offering which makes him impure. The Turkish delight represents a typical adolescent's obsession with sex. Montgomery describes Edmund's "face had become very red and his mouth and fingers were sticky," which places emphasis on the sexual atmosphere (Lewis, 40). Jadis's red lips also hold a sensual expression towards Edmund which symbolizes further sexual intentions. The impact of red in this situation is comparable to the class discussion on Little Red Riding Hood, where red in that novel showcases imagery of a woman's menstruation and the loss of virginity. Edmund's interaction with food is connected with his sexual desires while Anne's responsibility for cooking is associated with her becoming an adult.

Both Montgomery and Lewis include a righteous lesson for their audience. Anne was a character who started off as authentic and curious, and imaginative but then surpassed these traits to become matured. Anne's

imagination was her greatest strength yet it was her weakness as well, controlling her own self was one of her biggest struggles internally. In the novel, “ when Anne carried the pudding sauce in, she was imagining she was a nun...taking the veil to bury a broken heart in cloistered seclusion” (Montgomery, 125). In these moments when she imagines is often the times are food is spoiled, like the time she embarrassed Marilla in front of a guest. Good dishes prove Anne’s maturity and independence while spoiled food represents her immaturity and showcase her flaws. Created fantasies at inappropriate times can lead to failure is what the author is trying to teach the young audience. Overall, Montgomery cherishes the breezy childhood days, yet she also limits and tames Anne’s fantasies to gain control over her mind through good and spoiled food so she can progress to becoming an adult and reaching her full potential.

Montgomery expresses a moral lesson through a connectable character whereas Lewis directly utilizes a biblical reference to reach the audience. For example, “ How Aslan [a Christ figure] provided food for them all I don’t know” (Lewis 108). This reference is of when Jesus fed a crowd with very little food. Along with teaching the audience a valuable lesson, Lewis also emphasizes relevant teachings from the bible. Another example is “ the streams would run with wine instead of water” (Lewis 17). Food and drinks are referenced to plenty which is Lewis’s message; God is trusted to provide with plenty without any limits. When Lewis mentions “ You can think how good the new-caught fish smelled while they were frying and how the hungry children longed for them to be done,” he is differentiating between

wholesome meals and unhealthy sweets (Lewis 80). The rich siblings eat healthy foods and later a surprise dessert by Mrs. Beaver's rolls, proving the responsibility of eating in moderation. Sweets foods symbolize the lack of morality whereas nourishing food fuels and symbolizes morals, faith, and family. To further showcase biblical lessons, the Turkish Delight offered to Edmund connects to the forbidden fruit of the tree which tempted Eve. The Turkish Delight and the fruit of knowledge are both related to the shortcomings of mankind and the presence of evil. Lewis clearly states "there's nothing that spoils the taste of good ordinary food half so much as the memory of bad magic food" to link the two similar concepts (Lewis, 95). Both authors incorporate references from the bible to further educate their young audience.

Food in both C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* plays a significant role in getting the message across. The process of both the main characters becoming adults is represented clearly through the use of food. The adults that control the food have control. The children surpass the barriers to transition into adulthood only when they gain full control over their food whether it be Lewis's Edmund or Montgomery's Anne. Anne takes the responsibility of the cooking and becomes independent while Edmund discovered his urges and tries to manage them. Both authors use food to symbolize moral lessons and get a message across to their audience. Although both books are very different with different genres, they both showcase righteous teachings through their representation of food while portraying the journey of both children into their

adult years by the help from others to feel content with themselves as well as others.